

REMARKS

Applicant requests that the Examiner indicate that all references submitted by Applicant's Information Disclosure Statement have been considered. While the Examiner indicated that U.S. references were considered, there is no such indication that the non-U.S. references (namely German and Japanese patent documents) were considered. Copies of the two non-U.S. references were submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement (see copy of the return post card). If the Examiner wishes, Applicant can provide new copies of these two non-U.S. references.

The Examiner rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, as claim 9 provides the elements of the invention. Nevertheless, in the interest of clarity, claim 9 has been cancelled. New claim 10 is similar to claim 9.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Osborn. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 1 and its dependent claims have been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 2, which provides a guard rail around the opening. Also, claim 1 provides that decking extends from the guard rail to an edge of the platform. An example is illustrated in Fig. 1, where the guard rail 87 is around the opening 85 and the decking extends away from the opening to the edge of the platform, where the outer or side guard rails 131 are provided.

Osborn does not teach or suggest this. Instead, Osborn teaches a platform with hinged grates 42 (see Figs. 2 and 7). No guard rail is provided around the opening. Instead, the guard rail is provided around the outside edges of the platform 10.

Applicant's invention, with the guard rail around the opening, allows a person to work around the opening without falling in. The opening is designed to receive equipment, such as an engine. In contrast, Osborn teaches that its opening is accessible by personnel. Osborn does not contemplate personnel working on equipment that extends through the opening. The Osborn opening, or hatch, is covered with a hinged grate 42. A guard rail around the Osborn hatch is unnecessary and is undesirable. When the grate is closed, the opening is closed and there is no need for a guard rail. A guard rail around the Osborn opening would impede movement on the platform. In addition, one would have to lean over a guard rail to yank the Osborn grate open, risking possible injuries such as a back injury.

Claim 2 has been amended to provide a second guard rail. The platform thus has two guard rails, one at the opening and the other at the platform edge. There is a workspace between the two guard rails. The prior art does not teach this.

The Examiner rejected claims 4-6, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable by Osborn. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

These claims are dependent upon claim 1, the allowability of which has been discussed above. In addition, claims 6 and 8 provide that the support structure comprise a hoop-shaped beam located around the opening and that is coupled to the support structure by tangential members. Osborn simply has no teaching or suggestion about such a beam or coupling mechanism. Osborn contemplates a square or rectangular opening, not a hoop-shaped opening. Furthermore, Osborn certainly does not contemplate tangential members.

Claim 9 has been cancelled. However, claim 10 is similar to claim 9. Claims 11-17 are dependent upon claim 10.

Osborn does not make obvious the invention of claim 10 which specifically claims an apparatus that comprises a lift platform in combination with a vertically oriented engine inside of the opening. The opening of Osborn is meant to allow access to a worker. The Osborn opening also allows workers on the platform to look down onto tankers beneath the platform. Osborn contains no teaching or suggestion that any equipment is meant to pass through the opening in such a manner so as to be worked upon. As Osborn states in the initial paragraph, column 1, lines 5-10, Osborn relates to vertically movable platforms from which workers can inspect the tops of mobile truck tanks, etc. Thus, the opening is simply not meant to surround the tank truck or trailer.

New claim 11 provides that the engine comprises an aircraft engine. In many circumstances aircraft engines are best worked upon when they are in a vertical orientation. Osborn clearly contemplates tanker trucks in a horizontal orientation.

The Examiner rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Osborn in view of Hiyama. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 3 is dependent upon claim 1, the allowability of which has been discussed above.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

If any additional fees are required, please charge our deposit account number 23-2770.

Respectfully submitted,



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